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**WISCONSIN MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP (WMEP).** WMEP provides technical expertise and hands-on business assistance to help small and mid-sized manufacturers to improve their productivity and profitability. WMEP's three regional centers and seven field offices serve Wisconsin manufacturers in the northeast, southeast and southwest quadrants of the state. WMEP works in coordination with Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center (NWMOC). Contact: Michael Klonsinski, 2601 Crossroads Drive, Suite 145, Madison, WI 53718, (877) 856-8588, fax: (608) 240-1744, email: [wmep@wmep.org](mailto:wmep@wmep.org), website: [www.wmep.org](http://www.wmep.org)

## THE MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP IN WISCONSIN

Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) is a nationwide system of services and support for smaller manufacturers to become more globally competitive. At the heart of the system is a network of affiliated, locally-based manufacturing extension centers. Each center, like WMEP, is a partnership, typically involving federal, state, and local governments; industry; educational institutions; and other sources of expertise, information and funding support.

### COMPANY CLIPS

#### Value Stream Mapping Brings Quick Results for Pointe Precision

Pointe Precision, established in 1995, produces tight tolerance engineered parts to customer specifications for the aerospace, medical, recreational, industrial, and fluid power industries. Located in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, the company currently employs less than 250 people. Under increasing pressure from its existing customers to cut prices, Pointe Precision realized it needed to reduce waste and make its processes more efficient to reduce costs. After attending a workshop on lean manufacturing hosted by the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WMEP), Pointe Precision contacted WMEP to help implement lean practices at its facility.

WMEP worked with Pointe Precision to understand its immediate needs and together decided to conduct a value stream mapping exercise. First WMEP drew a detailed picture of each part of the operation to produce a "current state map"—the situation as it exists today. With input from the Pointe Precision team, WMEP mapped out the entire manufacturing process, including cycle times, down times, in-process inventory, material moves, and information flow paths. Then the team worked to identify ways to improve its process flow to eliminate waste and utilize time, talent, and equipment more efficiently. These improvements define the "future state map" that helped Pointe Precision see its potential evolution over time. Finally, WMEP and Pointe Precision began implementing process improvements, leading to a 32 percent reduction of work-in-process and additional reductions in production-lead times. The company reduced its defective parts per million by 39 percent, and improved on-time delivery from 10 to 95 percent.

*Continued*

### STATE STATS

DATA\* COVERS JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2001

Number of projects completed  
with firms  
**1412**

Number of firms served  
**516**

Number of firms served for  
the first time  
**229**

Federal cost share for current  
operating year  
**\$2,591,900**

State/other cost share for current  
operating year  
**\$5,183,800**

*\*Data as reported from center*

DATA\*\* COVERS JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2001

Increased sales & retained sales  
**\$9,761,000**

Client capital investment  
**\$5,681,000**

Total cost savings  
**\$10,674,000**

Jobs (created & retained)  
**81**

*\*\*Source: Independent client impact survey*



### **Lean Culture Becomes a Team Building Force at Spuncast**

Spuncast, Inc. is a Watertown, Wisconsin steel foundry that employs 106 people. The company's manufacturing process uses centrifugal force to ensure that each metal casting it manufactures has a perfect circular balance for maximum strength. Just six months ago, it took a different sort of force for President Ron Rohrmayer to realize that his organization was out of balance and losing strength—and momentum—fast. Rohrmayer recalls that although Spuncast had been growing for years, the economy began to deliver consecutive blows that proved increasingly difficult to manage. The company contacted the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WMEP) for help finding a way to combat the effects of the economy on its business.

WMEP manufacturing specialists performed a comprehensive assessment of the company and determined that Spuncast's organizational structure was not supporting its strategic goals and growth. WMEP helped Spuncast's 106 employees build a lean enterprise culture, a manufacturing philosophy based on teamwork, cooperative leadership, effective communication, and continuous improvement. As one part of the process, WMEP utilized personality assessments to convert potential team conflicts and weaknesses into opportunities for team growth. In terms of employee involvement, the company has turned itself around. In the beginning there was very little communication, and everyone experienced a considerable amount of job-related stress. From virtually no employee involvement six months ago, now over half of the work force participates in continuous improvement activities.

Although it is still too early to quantify results, Spuncast will measure its return on investment according to hours and dollars spent on training, employee involvement in continuous improvement activities, improved work attendance, and increased productivity. All of these measures will contribute to the positive impact on costs and profits it expects to see in the coming quarters.